Study for the Accuracy of Self-Reported High School Graduation Data Reported by New Entitlement Recipients

DIRECTIVE

On June 23, 2006, the Commission directed Student Aid Commission staff (staff) to work in collaboration with Grant Advisory Committee (GAC) members to design a study methodology which would determine the accuracy of self-reported high school graduation data reported by new entitlement recipients on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). With that directive, staff and volunteer GAC study group members will work together to: identify the issues involved; develop a methodology for data gathering; review available data, discuss and resolve known issues impacting the study, develop a study timeline and generate recommendations for the Commissioners consideration of the proposed study design.

These materials are being provided in order to facilitate a focused work group meeting. Staff developed the following draft which provides a proposed methodology with alternative methods of data collection along with tables which provide current entitlement statistics and some generalized characteristics of the student population for informational purposes. This information is meant to assist you in our development of the study design. Following each topic, there are italicized discussion points which are meant to assist the workgroup in developing the study design. They are not meant to be inclusive of all discussion topics. Furthermore, this draft does not include a timeline as it will be part of the group discussion for development and will be based directly upon the data collection methodology chosen.

PARTICIPANTS

In order to maintain human subjects concerns, staff have determined the study would be best served to address the student population which is 19 years or older. These are high school entitlement, new recipient students who identified a June 2005 graduation date on the FAFSA form. Table 1A, on the following page, shows the number of these students who are Cal Grant A and Cal Grant B eligible, along with totals, by segment. For example, of the Cal Grant A population, there are 114 students identified within the Community College segment and 279 within the University of California segment and so on.

From Table 1A, staff determined for purposes of sampling and in consideration of study timeframes, that 10% would provide a generous and viable representative of each segment by each award type. For purposes of the study and in consideration of response rate, staff would like to elevate the sample to include an additional 5%. Therefore, 15% of each segments population per each type of grant would be included in the sample. Staff would program SAS to identify participants, assign a unique identifier and generate the random sample. The represented population is as follows:

Segment	Number of Recipients Cal Grant A	Number of Recipients Cal Grant B	15% of A	15% of B	Total Sample Size per Segment
CCC	114	688	17	103	120
UC	279	251	42	38	80
CSU	198	333	30	50	80
ICU	166	176	25	26	51
PCC/Other	110	336	17	50	67
ALL SEGMENTS	**867**	**1784**	**131**	**267**	**398**

High School Entitlement Program
New Recipients
High School Graduation Date: June, 2005
Total Award Amounts and Average Awards, by Program and Segment
Academic Year 2006-2007

Table 1A

	Cal Grant A					Cal Grant B					Total Cal Grants				
Segment & Status	Number of Recips	% of All Segs	Total Award Amounts	% of All Segs	Average Award	Number of Recips	% of All Segs	Total Award Amounts	% of All Segs	Average Award	Number of Recips	% of All Segs	Total Award Amounts	% of All Segs	Average Award
CCC															
New	114	13.1				688	38.6	$1,067,615	15.3	$1,552	802	30.3	$1,067,615	8.7	$1,552
All	114	13.1	$0	0.0	$0	688	38.6	$1,067,615	15.3	$1,552	802	30.3	$1,067,615	8.7	$1,552
UC															
New	279	32.2	$1,713,339	32.1	$6,141	251	14.1	$1,487,607	21.3	$5,927	530	20.0	$3,200,946	26.0	$6,040
All	279	32.2	$1,713,339	32.1	$6,141	251	14.1	$1,487,607	21.3	$5,927	530	20.0	$3,200,946	26.0	$6,040
CSU															
New	198	22.8	$498,960	9.4	$2,520	333	18.7	$1,048,203	15.0	$3,148	531	20.0	$1,547,163	12.6	$2,914
All	198	22.8	$498,960	9.4	$2,520	333	18.7	$1,048,203	15.0	$3,148	531	20.0	$1,547,163	12.6	$2,914
ICU															
New	166	19.1	$1,686,090	31.6	$10,157	176	9.9	$1,421,899	20.4	$8,079	342	12.9	$3,107,989	25.2	$9,088
All	166	19.1	$1,686,090	31.6	$10,157	176	9.9	$1,421,899	20.4	$8,079	342	12.9	$3,107,989	25.2	$9,088
PCC/Other															
New	110	12.7	$1,437,538	26.9	$13,069	336	18.8	$1,955,839	28.0	$5,821	446	16.8	$3,393,377	27.6	$7,608
All	110	12.7	$1,437,538	26.9	$13,069	336	18.8	$1,955,839	28.0	$5,821	446	16.8	$3,393,377	27.6	$7,608
ALL SEGS															
New	**867**	**100**	**$5,335,927**	**100**	**$7,086**	**1,784**	**100**	**$6,981,163**	**100**	**$3,913**	**2,651**	**100**	**$12,317,090**	**100**	**$4,855**
All	**867**	**100**	**$5,335,927**	**100**	**$7,086**	**1,784**	**100**	**$6,981,163**	**100**	**$3,913**	**2,651**	**100**	**$12,317,090**	**100**	**$4,855**

NOTE: CCC Cal Grant A recipients are included in totals but because they do not receive a paid award until they transfer to a four-year institution, they are not included in the calculation of average award

The total population of new recipients for Cal Grant A and B represent 17% or 400 students randomly selected and included in the analysis. For Cal Grant A there were 132 students from each of the segments and for Cal Grant B, there were 268 students.

Work Group Feedback: Please consider the proposed study population and provide your concerns on sampling, size and response rate. Please also consider if you feel it would be appropriate to increase sample size in any or more specific segments while also considering the time and potential cost involved.

DATA COLLECTION

This study needs to determine the accuracy of students' self-reporting their graduation date on the FAFSA. To that end, staff identified the following potential data collection methods for the group to consider for data collection:

1. Survey the students by mail (postcard return)
2. Survey the students by phone
3. Survey the high schools by mail or phone
4. Survey the students by mail and further verify the graduation information presented on the postcard by calling the high school

The methodologies would follow strict guidelines to ensure confidentiality of the students. No identifier information will be on materials mailed however, unique identifiers will be assigned in order to calculate response rate and also verify reporting of respondent. Per human subjects concerns, no data collected will be used to harm any student participant. Based on information from counsel, the methodologies proposed here will not interfere with human subjects requirements.

1. Survey the students by mail (postcard return): requires the development of a survey postcard which would be mailed out to students with a letter explaining the survey. A postcard inside the letter would be completed by the student and mailed back, postage paid. A draft of this survey postcard will be provided at the September 5th meeting. Basically, it will ask the student to check a box yes or no for graduated and then if yes, check if by high school graduation/diploma, by exit exam, by GED and so on. A unique identifier would be listed on the postcard which would allow us to link back to the students FAFSA data.

2. Survey the students by phone: would require the development of the phone call script and would also require many staff hours. Questions asked would be similar to those on the above postcard method.

3. Survey the high schools: would require either a mailing or phone script and one high school might be impacted by more than one response. It would be time involved for the high school and staff (more so by phone survey). High schools in most cases would not have information related to alternate graduation method such as the GED exam.

4. Survey the students by mail and upon response, further verify the graduation information presented on the postcard by calling the high school: this method provides for student self-reporting as well as data verification by the high school. Staff would recommend selecting a few of those students who responded they graduated by high school diploma, and calling the high school to verify the information and date of graduation. This method would require more time however, it provides a verification of the data provided by the student. *The workgroup may determine the verification method. For example, how many students per segments would undergo this extra verification?*

Work Group Feedback: Are there additional methods of data collection? What method do you prefer and why? What problems do you foresee with the proposed methods? Please consider timeliness, costs and staff time in your consideration of data collection.

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

Based upon the selected methodology, staff will proceed to identify steps needed in order to collect and then analyze the data. Staff anticipates that data will be presented in a short report format followed by findings presented in data tables.

Work Group Feedback: Does the workgroup feel a written report is necessary and if so, how involved should it be and what should it include? Is presentation of the data in tables enough? How involved would the workgroup want to be in the development and design of a report? Workgroup may develop a report outline and agree upon it's inclusions in order to save time upon the reports review and approval of the workgroup.

FUTURE WORKGROUP MEETINGS

Staff would like to recommend scheduling all future study workgroup meetings during the September 5th meeting. Additionally, staff would like to document workgroup participation and involvement in the study design and delivery.

Work Group Feedback: How involved and in what decisions would the workgroup like to participate in? Please provide staff input related to any GAC motions that may be required and should also be incorporated into the timeline.

TIMELINE

Workgroup will develop the timeline for the study based upon the chosen methodology.

Work Group Feedback: In consideration of the timeline for the study, please advise staff of limitations that certain dates may pose on data collection. For example, the week of December 24th would not be a great time to send out mailings. Are there additional timing concerns and what are they?

COMMISSION MEETING

Staff would like to work with the workgroup to identify what elements to present to the Commission on September 8th and at future Commission meetings in relation to presenting a study status.

The remaining materials are presented for informational purposes.

CONSIDERATIONS

The following are attributes of self-reported data: 1.) expected high school graduation date, 2.) one-year delay applicants for the high school entitlement, 3.) second time applicants, 4.) characteristics and exceptions to the CAHSEE

1. Expected High School Graduation Date

As part of the requirement for applying for the High School Entitlement Cal Grant, applicants have to provide their expected graduation date from high school on the FAFSA, and in addition, they have to send a completed GPA verification form to the Commission on or before the deadline of March 2nd. The information provided on the FAFSA informs the Commission on the applicant's expected graduation date from high school. However, with the implementation of the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), it is more likely that the expected high school graduation date reported on the FAFSA will not be accurate for certain number of high school Entitlement program applicants, and particularly, this would be the case for those applicants who failed to pass the CAHSEE or any alternative tests for obtaining the high school diploma before the March 2nd deadline. Consequently, the current method used by the Commission for collecting data on the high school graduation date (from the FAFSA) may present potential problems in terms of accuracy.

2. One-Year Delay Applicants for the High School Entitlement

Among applicants for the2006-07 High School Entitlement, the Commission staff identified 2,651 students, who stated on their FAFSA that they graduated from high school in June, 2005. Of these applicants, 867 students (about 33 percent) were offered a Cal Grant Entitlement A, and another group of 1,784 students (67 percent) were awarded a Cal Grant Entitlement B. The greatest majority of these new recipients of High School Entitlement Grant, 802 students (about 30 percent) planned to attend California Community Colleges (CCC), 531 students (about 20 percent) reported that they would attend the California State University (CSU), 530 students (about 20 percent) selected the University of California system (UC) as the school they would most likely attend, 446 students (about 17 percent) chose to go to a private career college (PCC), and 342 students (about 13 percent) selected to attend an independent college and university (ICU).

The 2006-07 applicants who graduated in June, 2005, were still within the time limit required upon graduation from a high school to apply for the High School Entitlement. However, the problem (a potential one) that may arise with the implementation of the CAHSEE in 2006-07 will be related to the issue of whether the graduates of June 2005 should be held to the same requirements as those of June 2006 in terms of passing the CAHSEE before becoming eligible for the High School Entitlement.

3. Second-Time Applicants

Subsequent analyses revealed that among the 2005 graduates who have applied for and received a High School Entitlement award one year later (in 2006-07), the majority was a first-

time applicant. Only, 22 recipients (approximately one percent) have applied twice for the High School Entitlement in both 2005-06 (first time) and 2006-07 (second time). However, the analysis was not able to uncover any objective explanations for these 22 students for applying twice for the High School Entitlement.

4. Characteristics

The characteristics of Cal Grant new recipients were reviewed with three primary attribute considerations. They included 1.) parental income distribution 2.) student income distribution – whether the student was considered dependent or independent and 3.) GPA distribution by education level. The characteristics tables (2A – 6A) provide a visual of 2005 graduates that were awarded funds for the academic year 2006-07. Data was captured using Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR) data as of August 14, 2006. See Tables 2A – 6A.

Entitlement Programs
Age and Gender Distribution
New Dependent and Independent Recipients
High School Graduation Date: June 2005
Academic Year 2006 – 2007

Table 2A

	High School Entitlement							
	Cal Grant A				Cal Grant B			
	Women		Men		Women		Men	
Age	No. of Recips	% of All	No. of Recips	% of All	No. of Recips	% of All	No. of Recips	% of All
17 or Under	3	0.6	2	0.6	3	0.3		0.0
18	60	11.0	28	8.6	129	12.5	91	12.1
19	413	76.1	235	72.5	713	69.2	503	66.7
20	63	11.6	56	17.3	157	15.2	144	19.1
21	2	0.4	1	0.3	6	0.6	11	1.5
22					4	0.4	1	0.1
23					2	0.2		0.0
24			1	0.3	1	0.1	1	0.1
25 - 29	1	0.2	1	0.3	6	0.6		
30 or Over	1	0.2			9	0.9	3	0.4
All Ages	**543**	**100**	**324**	**100**	**1,030**	**100**	**754**	**100**

The men and women in both Cal Grant A and B were distributed in 4 age groups - 17 years and under, 18 years to 24 years, age 25 – 29 and 30 years or over. The entitlement disbursements were directed impacted by age groups.

Entitlement Programs
Martial Status & Gender Distribution
New Dependent and Independent Recipients
High School Graduation Date: June 2005
Academic Year 2006-2007

Table 3A

	High School Entitlement							
	Cal Grant A				Cal Grant B			
	Women		Men		Women		Men	
Marital Status	No. of Recips	% of All	No. of Recips	% of All	No. of Recips	% of All	No. of Recips	% of All
Single	534	98.3	322	99.4	986	95.7	745	98.8
Married	9	1.7	2	0.6	40	3.9	8	1.1
Separated		0.0		0.0	4	0.4	1	0.1
All	**543**	**100**	**324**	**100**	**1,030**	**100**	**754**	**100**

Volume of single recipients that requested entitlements out weighted married or separated recipients.

Entitlement Programs
Parental Income Distribution
New Dependent and Independent Recipients
High School Graduation Date: June 2005
Academic Year 2006 – 2007

Table 4A

Segment	Parental Income Level	High School Entitlement			
		Cal Grant A		Cal Grant B	
		Number of Recips	% of All Incs	Number of Recips	% of All Incs
CCC	Under $12,000			155	27.5
	$12,000 - $23,999		0.0	206	36.5
	$24,000 - $35,999	9	8.0	151	26.8
	$36,000 - $47,999	36	31.9	52	9.2
	$48,000 - $59,999	39	34.5		
	$60,000 - $71,999	25	22.1		
	$72,000 & Above	4	3.5		
	All Income Levels	113	100.0	564	100.0
UC	Under $12,000			57	23.3
	$12,000 - $23,999			73	29.8
	$24,000 - $35,999	7	2.5	102	41.6
	$36,000 - $47,999	66	23.7	13	5.3
	$48,000 - $59,999	107	38.4		
	$60,000 - $71,999	83	29.7		
	$72,000 & Above	16	5.7		
	All Income Levels	279	100.0	245	100.0
CSU	Under $12,000			53	17.4
	$12,000 - $23,999		0.0	80	26.3
	$24,000 - $35,999	5	2.5	120	39.5
	$36,000 - $47,999	56	28.3	51	16.8
	$48,000 - $59,999	61	30.8		
	$60,000 - $71,999	65	32.8		
	$72,000 & Above	11	5.6		
	All Income Levels	198	100.0	304	100.0
ICU	Under $12,000	7	4.3	33	23.4
	$12,000 - $23,999	8	5.0	41	29.1
	$24,000 - $35,999	15	9.3	51	36.2
	$36,000 - $47,999	26	16.1	16	11.3
	$48,000 - $59,999	44	27.3		
	$60,000 - $71,999	54	33.5		
	$72,000 & Above	7	4.3		
	All Income Levels	161	100.0	141	100.0
PCC & Other	Under $12,000	5	5.1	57	21.0
	$12,000 - $23,999	17	17.3	98	36.2
	$24,000 - $35,999	19	19.4	90	33.2
	$36,000 - $47,999	24	24.5	26	9.6
	$48,000 - $59,999	20	20.4		
	$60,000 - $71,999	11	11.2		
	$72,000 & Above	2	2.0		
	All Income Levels	98	100.0	271	100.0
Total, All Segs	**Under $12,000**	**12**	**1.4**	**355**	**23.3**
	$12,000 - $23,999	**25**	**2.9**	**498**	**32.7**
	$24,000 - $35,999	**55**	**6.5**	**514**	**33.7**
	$36,000 - $47,999	**208**	**24.5**	**158**	**10.4**
	$48,000 - $59,999	**271**	**31.9**		
	$60,000 - $71,999	**238**	**28.0**		
	$72,000 & Above	**40**	**4.7**	**0**	**0.0**
	All Income Levels	**849**	**100.0**	**1,525**	**100.0**

Parental income for Cal Grant A was wide spread and the number of recipients was highest for the UC campuses while the Cal Grant B recipients' parental income maximum level was at the CCC campuses.

Entitlement Programs
Student Income Distribution
New Recipients
High School Graduation Date: June 2005
Academic Year 2006 – 2007

Table 5A

Segment	Student Income Level	High School Entitlement			
		Cal Grant A		Cal Grant B	
		Number of Recips	% of All Incs	Number of Recips	% of All Incs
CCC	Under $ 6,000			77	62.1
	$ 6,000 - $11,999			22	17.7
	$12,000 - $17,999			12	9.7
	$18,000 - $23,999			6	4.8
	$24,000 - $29,999			2	1.6
	$30,000 & Above	1	100.0	5	4.0
	All Income Levels	1	100.0	124	100.0
UC	Under $ 6,000			4	66.7
	$ 6,000 - $11,999			2	33.3
	$12,000 - $17,999				
	$18,000 - $23,999				
	$24,000 - $29,999				
	$30,000 & Above				
	All Income Levels	0	0.0	6	100.0
CSU	Under $ 6,000			20	69.0
	$ 6,000 - $11,999			3	10.3
	$12,000 - $17,999			2	6.9
	$18,000 - $23,999			3	10.3
	$24,000 - $29,999			1	3.4
	$30,000 & Above				
	All Income Levels	0	0.0	29	100.0
ICU	Under $ 6,000			22	62.9
	$ 6,000 - $11,999	2	40.0	10	28.6
	$12,000 - $17,999			2	5.7
	$18,000 - $23,999	3	60.0		
	$24,000 - $29,999			1	2.9
	$30,000 & Above				
	All Income Levels	5	100.0	35	100.0
PCC & Other	Under $ 6,000	4	33.3	29	44.6
	$ 6,000 - $11,999	3	25.0	21	32.3
	$12,000 - $17,999	2	16.7	6	9.2
	$18,000 - $23,999	2	16.7	7	10.8
	$24,000 - $29,999			1	1.5
	$30,000 & Above	1	8.3	1	1.5
	All Income Levels	12	100.0	65	100.0
Total, All Segs	**Under $ 6,000**	**4**	**22.2**	**152**	**58.7**
	$ 6,000 - $11,999	**5**	**27.8**	**58**	**22.4**
	$12,000 - $17,999	**2**	**11.1**	**22**	**8.5**
	$18,000 - $23,999	**5**	**27.8**	**16**	**6.2**
	$24,000 - $29,999	**0**	**0.0**	**5**	**1.9**
	$30,000 & Above	**2**	**11.1**	**6**	**2.3**
	All Income Levels	**18**	**100.0**	**259**	**100.0**

Student income level for PCC and other colleges increased highest for CAL A and B recipients.

Entitlement Program
GPA Distribution by Educational Level
New Recipients
High School Graduation Date: June 2005
Academic Year 2006-2007

Table 6A

Educational Level		High School Entitlement			
		Cal Grant A		Cal Grant B	
		Number of Recips	% of All GPA's	Number of Recips	% of All GPA's
1st Year					
	3.75 - 4.00	46	14.5	28	2.8
	3.50 - 3.74	60	18.9	64	6.4
	3.25 - 3.49	97	30.6	86	8.6
	3.00 - 3.24	114	36.0	118	11.8
	2.75 - 2.99			157	15.7
	2.50 - 2.74			190	19.0
	2.25 - 2.49			185	18.5
	2.00 - 2.24			174	17.4
	All GPA's	317	100.0	1,002	100.0
2nd Year					
	3.75 - 4.00	132	24.2	91	11.7
	3.50 - 3.74	139	25.5	104	13.4
	3.25 - 3.49	112	20.6	119	15.3
	3.00 - 3.24	162	29.7	123	15.8
	2.75 - 2.99			122	15.7
	2.50 - 2.74			95	12.2
	2.25 - 2.49			66	8.5
	2.00 - 2.24			59	7.6
	All GPA's	545	100.0	779	100.0
3rd Year					
	3.75 - 4.00	1	20.0		
	3.50 - 3.74	2	40.0		
	3.25 - 3.49	1	20.0	2	66.7
	3.00 - 3.24	1	20.0	1	33.3
	2.75 - 2.99				
	2.50 - 2.74				
	2.25 - 2.49				
	2.00 - 2.24				
	All GPA's	5	100.0	3	100.0
4th Year					
	3.75 - 4.00				
	3.50 - 3.74				
	3.25 - 3.49				
	3.00 - 3.24				
	2.75 - 2.99				
	2.50 - 2.74				
	2.25 - 2.49				
	2.00 - 2.24				
	All GPA's	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
All Levels					
	3.75 - 4.00	**179**	**20.6**	**119**	**6.7**
	3.50 - 3.74	**201**	**23.2**	**168**	**9.4**
	3.25 - 3.49	**210**	**24.2**	**207**	**11.6**
	3.00 - 3.24	**277**	**31.9**	**242**	**13.6**
	2.75 - 2.99			**279**	**15.6**
	2.50 - 2.74			**285**	**16.0**
	2.25 - 2.49			**251**	**14.1**
	2.00 - 2.24			**233**	**13.1**
	All GPA's	**867**	**100.0**	**1,784**	**100.0**

GPA distribution by education level was highest for 2nd year recipients followed by 1st year recipients.